

Brushy Creek Trails Advisory Board  
Minutes  
December 15, 2008  
Prairie Resource Center

Meeting began at 6:15 p.m. Board members present included: Donna Christensen, Deb Lewis, Ron Jacobson, Linda Jenny, Kelly Keller, Chad Kelchen, Pat Reed, Kevin Szcodronski. Absent were Mike Tinkham and Beth Aswegan. Also present were Amber O'Neill, Greg VanFosson, Erin Meehan, Steve Bell, Mike O'Brien, Ken Egli, Jay Anderson, Dan Campidilli, and Steve Cink. Minutes from the previous meeting will be approved at the spring meeting to give the new members a chance to look at them.

Parks Bureau Chief Kevin Szcodronski welcomed everyone including the new TAB appointees Ron, Kelly, and Linda. Ruth Nellesen resigned from the board last summer, Kristi Schaaf declined her re-appointment, and Myron Groat was not reappointed. We thank them for their years of valuable service and welcome them to stay involved in the future. The Natural Resource Commission has taken over the responsibility of TAB appointments and took the task very seriously to ensure gender equality and a balance of types of active Brushy Creek trail users.

First item for discussion was wagon use on the trails at Brushy Creek. This had previously been mentioned at the October 2007 meeting because we had inquiries about whether the new rock trail would be open for wagon use. The determination by park staff, supervisors and the board was that the trail was not wide enough and some of the steep terrain was not conducive to allowing such activity. Congestion and safety issues would be of concern to the other trail users.

Jay Anderson, president of the Hitchin' To Go Driving Club made a plea for wagon use on some of the trails with support from 3 other members—Ken, Steve, and Dan. This group is made up of around 100 families, mostly elderly or unable to ride horses for health reasons. Last year, the club asked for a Park Manager to come speak at a meeting in Fort Dodge about trail use and the park in general. At that time, we had determined from the TAB meeting that the rock trail should not be available for wagon use and in fact there was no policy to allow wagons on any trails at all. Needless to say, this was upsetting to the group. Jay told the group that they have been using a field access road and part of what is now the rock trail to go from the south campground to the north campground for years. He also said they had been on the southwest river trails and on trails north of the park manager residence, unknown to park staff. The club members presented a map of trails they would like access to on a regular basis, as well as some that would perhaps be used only on an approved special event basis. The board would like to discuss this issue further at the spring meeting after touring some of the proposed trails for wagon use.

Officer elections were next on the agenda. Donna nominated Pat Reed for president, seconded by Linda Jenny. All approved. Secretary duties will continue to be performed by park managers Amber O'Neill and Chad Kelchen.

Kevin gave an update on the poor condition of the state park budget and showed a power point "highlighting" the flood and tornado damage to state parks this year. At this time open staff positions will not be filled and seasonal help will be drastically cut. Facilities will remain open, but less grass will be mowed and things may not look as nice as usual. Any volunteers will be greatly appreciated this summer.

A power point on Brushy Creek updates was given by Chad. Brushy experienced extensive flood damage to trails, fishing jetties, trail bridges, and roads. FEMA has assessed the damage and is paying \$53,000 to help repair these areas.

At about 90% complete, the lake trail opened for all-weather use mid-summer with two temporary detours around unfinished sections on the east side of the lake. We are waiting for terrace projects in some of those areas. Trails were closed during the ITRA competitive trail ride this year, so the all-weather trail received heavy use that weekend and held up very well.

Despite the poor weather and flooding, camping revenue was about \$100 above last year. Chad mentioned some things to remember and pass along to your friends to save the park time and money. The most time-consuming weekend activity for park staff is collecting receipts. Campers are supposed to self-register within a ½ hour of arrival and re-register by 4 p.m. each day. This is especially a problem in the equestrian campgrounds. Too much time is spent driving around trying to collect money from unpaid campsites. Another problem is watering horses too close to the hydrants. Sometimes the horse lifts its head and catches the bridle on the hydrant, thus bending it or completely pulling it from the ground. Or a horse that is standing too close may just back into a hydrant and bend it enough that it starts leaking underground. Each time a hydrant has to be dug up and replaced it costs at least \$500. This happened 3 times one summer in the South Campground and happened in the North Campground on Labor Day weekend this year where there was no separate shutoff for the hydrant, so the entire water system was shut down while it was repaired.

The next meeting is set for Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2008 with a 4 p.m. tour and 6 p.m. meeting. Meet at the Prairie Resource Center.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.